

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
HOUSTON DIVISION

RUSSELL, et al,
Plaintiffs

v.

HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS, et al,
Defendants

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[]
[]
[]
[]

No. 4:19-cv-00226

Hon. Lee H. Rosenthal

U.S. District Judge

REPORT OF SHERIFF ED GONZALEZ JUNE 12, 2020

We begin this report with a sobering analysis from the Justice Management Institute, presented at this week's meeting of the Harris County Commissioners Court. The criminal justice system in this County is in crisis, according to JMI, because of the overwhelming volume of cases. Ever since Hurricane Harvey, the backlog has worsened.

JMI stated that even if no new felony arrests were made, it would take 13 months just to address the backlog of cases. At the current rate, it would take 54 months to catch up. It predicts, at the current pace of arrests and dispositions, the jail would exceed 10,000 inmates by Labor Day. In today's world, the County would have no option to outsource detention of overflow inmates at alternate facilities. JMI urged the Commissioners Court to take aggressive action, suggesting that a first step would be dismissal of charges on all non-violent felonies.

The Sheriff also wishes to report on some of the matters discussed in yesterday's hearing with the Court. First, as the Court requested, the HCSO combined the prior lists of non-violent offenders, culled those who have already been released, and generated a fresh list, segregated by each felony court. HCSO has already sent a separate list to each felony judge. The Sheriff stands ready to escort the inmates on those lists for formal bail hearings as soon as scheduled by each court.

Second, of the 76 inmates who would otherwise be eligible for release as a result of good time credits, only 15 have now been released (leaving the remaining 61 still in jail). As part of the transmittal of the new lists, the HCSO is also reminding each judge of any remaining inmates from his/her court who could be released with a simple order.

Now, the numbers:

1. As of May 29, 2020, the total jail population was 8,117 (approximately 90% are felony pre-trial detainees).
2. The new lists referred to above contains a total of 525 inmates in the jail, charged with non-violent offenses and having no prior violent convictions.

This is the number we will monitor going forward.

3. Regarding the inmates:

- 2,554 have been tested, with 993 tested positive (of whom, 888 remain in custody today).
 - 845 of those who tested positive have recovered and remain in custody.
 - 1,526 tested negative.
4. 778 in observational quarantine (no symptoms, but exposed to COVID).
An additional 601 are in buffer quarantine (newly booked).
5. Regarding the HSCO staff:
- 331 have tested positive, including 304 who work in the jail.
 - 255 of those who tested positive have recovered and returned to work.
 - 76 in quarantine.

Respectfully submitted.

/s/ Murray Fogler

Murray Fogler

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ATTORNEYS FOR SHERIFF ED GONZALEZ

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on June 12, 2020, a copy of this document was served on counsel of record via electronic filing in accordance with the USDC Southern District of Texas Procedures for Electronic Filing.

/s/ Murray Fogler
Murray Fogler